

REMARKS

This Amendment and the following remarks are intended to fully respond to the Office Action mailed March 16, 2007. In that Office Action, claims 1-22 were examined and all claims were rejected.

Claims 9-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being non-statutory subject matter;

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being non-statutory subject matter;

Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. ¶ 102(e) as being anticipated by Hanna et al. (USPN 6,801,998);

Reconsideration of these rejections, as they might apply to the original and amended claims in view of these remarks, is respectfully requested.

In this Response, claims 1, 3, 9, 12, 15, and 16 have been amended; claim 2 has been canceled; no new claims have been added. Therefore, claims 1 and 3-22 remain present for examination. Support for the claim amendments can be found in the specification at least at pages 3, 10-11, 23-25, 27-29, Figures 2, 7, 8 & 10, and Claim 2.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 9-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being non-statutory subject matter. Applicants believe claims 9-15 as written were drawn to statutory subject matter; however, in order to expedite prosecution, claim 9 has been amended to include an initiating system, including a processing unit and computer storage media. Accordingly, claim 9 now clearly recites statutory subject matter. Claims 10-15 depend from claim 9 and are similarly drawn to statutory subject matter. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being non-statutory subject matter. Applicants believe claim 16 as written was drawn to statutory subject matter; however, in order to expedite prosecution, claim 16 has been amended to recite computer storage medium rather than computer readable medium. Per at least pages 10 and 11 of the specification, computer

storage medium recites statutory subject matter, and reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. ¶ 102(e)

Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. ¶ 102(e) as being anticipated by Hanna et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,801,998 (hereinafter “Hanna”). Applicants respectfully disagree. Hanna is directed to a different problem, and presents a different solution, from the claimed system and method.

Hanna is directed to a system for determining whether an applicant (user) is a member of a preestablished, authorized group without providing the applicant the names of the authorized group(s). Particularly, the Hanna system comprises a client, an application server, and a group membership server. *See* Figure 1. The client logs onto the application server. *See* Column 4, line 64. The client then requests a service from the application server, and the application server requests that the client prove that the client is a member of a group that has permission to receive the requested service. *See* Column 4, lines 65 to Column 5, line 33.

The Hanna system is designed to avoid providing the client with specific information about what group(s) are eligible to receive a particular service because that knowledge would make hacking or spoofing easier for unauthorized users. *Id.* Accordingly, instead of providing the client with a list of authorized groups in which the client needs to prove membership, the application server provides the client with an encrypted message intended for the applicable group membership server. *See* Column 5, lines 36-62. The client cannot decrypt the message, but instead forwards the message to the group membership server, which decrypts the message to obtain the names of the authorized groups. *See* Column 5, line 62 to Column 6, line 2. The group membership server then determines if the applicant (i.e., user of the client) is a member of one of the eligible groups and sends an encrypted message to the application server indicating either the applicant’s membership (or nonmembership) in the specified group(s) or the criteria for membership in the specified group(s). *See* Column 6, line 2 to Column 7, line 6. The application server decrypts the message to determine whether to grant the requested service to the client. *Id.*

Accordingly, Hanna is directed to a system that allows an application server to determine whether a particular applicant has membership in an existing group that has particular permissions within the application server. By contrast, Applicants' claimed method and apparatus are directed to establishing a new group at a receiving system, and then establishing membership in the new group. For example, claim 2 has been rewritten as amended claim 1, which recites:

. . .

sending the group-signed group identity information document to a receiving system to establish the group identity at the receiving system.

See claim 1, emphasis added.

No group identities are “established” in Hanna. Rather, the application server already “knows” what groups have access to the requested service and queries the group server as to whether the applicant is a member of at least one of those groups. *See Hanna* Column 4, lines 65 to Column 5, line 33. In other words, group identities must already have been established in Hanna in order for the application server to determine whether the applicant is a member of such a group. In Claim 1, on the other hand, the “group-signed group identity information document” is sent to the receiving system in order to “establish the group identity at the receiving system.” Only thereafter can individuals establish their membership in the group by “sending a group-signed membership identity information document” to the receiving system. *See* Claim 3.

In the Office Action rejection of Claims 1 and 2, the Examiner appears to equate the application server of Hanna with the “initiating system” of Claim 1. The Examiner also appears to equate the group identification message of Hanna with the “group identity information document” of Claim 1. Neither comparison is tenable. The initiating system is described in the present specification as being used by individuals to establish a group and user identity, group membership, etc. to a receiving system. *See* specification, pp. 11-13. The application server of Hanna, on the other hand, is the target of access requests from users.

Moreover, the group identification message of Hanna is an encrypted message sent by the application server containing the names of the existing groups that have access to the service

being requested by the applicant. *See Hanna* Col. 5, lines 36-49. The group identity information document of Claim 1, by contrast, is described in the specification as containing the information necessary to establish a new group identity. See, e.g., specification pp. 23-25; pp. 13-15.

In addition, independent claim 9, as amended, requires “a send module transmitting the group certificate to establish the group identity at a receiving system.” Independent claim 16 requires “sending the group certificate to the receiving system to establish the group identity at the receiving system.” For at least the reasons stated above, neither of these limitations is anticipated by *Hanna*. *Hanna* requires preexisting group identities, while all of the independent claims require a group identity information document or group certificate to “establish” the group identity. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1, 9, and 16 is respectfully requested. Claims 3-8, 10-15, and 17-22 all depend on one of claims 1, 9, or 16, and are therefore also allowable over *Hanna* for at least the reasons stated above.

Conclusion

This Amendment fully responds to the Office Action mailed on March 16, 2007. Still, that Office Action may contain arguments and rejections and that are not directly addressed by this Amendment due to the fact that they are rendered moot in light of the preceding arguments in favor of patentability. Hence, failure of this Amendment to directly address an argument raised in the Office Action should not be taken as an indication that the Applicant believes the argument has merit. Furthermore, the claims of the present application may include other elements, not discussed in this Amendment, which are not shown, taught, or otherwise suggested by the art of record.

It is believed that no further fees are due with this Response. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayment with respect to this patent application to deposit account number 13-2725.

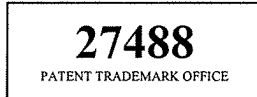
In light of the above remarks and amendments, it is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any additional issues need to be resolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attempt to resolve those issues.

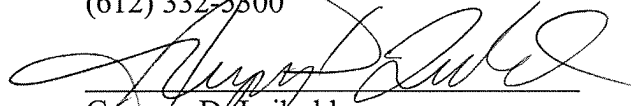
Application No. 10/692,530

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5800

Date: June 15, 2007





Gregory D. Leibold
Reg. No. 36,408